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SABBATH MORNING

There is a Sabbath quietness to this morning,
A violin-sadness that fills the air
With tranquil hymns. A grey blur
Of doves settles on a roof
Like a flurry of softly falling snow.
The gentle whirring of their wings
Creeps into my consciousness
Until their beating presses out
The broken rythms in my breast.

—*Marjorie Walton, '37.*

PANAMORIC TRIAD

Happiness

Rain smashing
into little diamonds
against my window-pane.
In the glare of street light,
little diamonds sparkle
madly in their moment . . .
then run into
red mud.

Hopelessness

A hungry, grey mouse
caught . . .
bled . . .
died . . .
for a piece of cheese.

Ecstasy

Sunlight
came
suddenly
upon the prism
of my heart.

—*Louise Burns, '37.*

TO A NUN

In the dim cathedral dusk,
I see in your eyes
The warmth of the altar candles,
Flanked row on row, waxy, white—
like your hands.

—*Eleanor Smith,* '38.

CONJECTURE

Suppose that winter having come,
When skies are chilled and gray,
The wind complaining gloomily—
Suppose that winter should stay.

Suppose despair once having come,
When soul is bruised and pained,
The heart is grieving deeply—
Suppose despair remained.

—*Edna Weaver,* '39.

BRIEF MOMENT

I hold you, fragile flower, within my hand,
And feel your feathery touch so light, so cool,
So thrilling that my fingers tremble in ecstasy
And in delight of fear.

What exquisite pain
To crush your petals, feel their coolness fade,
Their crispness wilt. My will is now your fate,
And in this brief omnipotence I feel
All bliss to be within the heat of pain.

—*Marjorie Walton,* '37.

A WHITE SAIL SHAKING

The sun had not yet risen, and a thick, grey fog rested over the mountains which obscured the little village on the shore. The sea was calm. In the distance one could observe fishermen pulling in their nets which they had left in the water overnight to catch fish. Other men prepared their barks, adjusted their sails, and trailed oars and yards out of a big vault which was built beneath a rock in order to keep their ship implements safe. Nobody was at leisure. Even women and old men who could not go out in the sea again were active on the shore.

"See, Mary, there is our priest," said an old woman to a little one of about ten. "He is getting into a boat. Anthony will bring him across the sea to town. Heavens! how sleepy he looks." She waved her hand to a little friendly man who was busy arranging his seat on the bark. All the other fishers stopped working for a moment to see their priest off; he nodded his head in a friendly manner to the left and to the right.

"Why does the priest have to go to town, grandma?" the little girl wanted to know. "Have the people in town no priest that they must borrow him from us?"

"No, my child," the woman replied, "they have many priests and beautiful churches, too, but he has to go to town and see some friends of his who are ill." And she looked down to the bark which was just about to leave the shore.

"Do you think that we shall have clear weather, my son?" asked the little priest.

"The sun is not up yet," said Anthony, "but the fog won't be much of a hindrance."

"Then sail quickly so we can arrive before it gets very warm."

Anthony grasped the oars and hastened forward. Suddenly he paused and looked up to the top of a steep road which descended from the village to the harbor. A slender young girl, descending the hill in great haste and waving with a handkerchief, was visible on the road. She carried a bundle beneath her arm and her appearance was rather indifferent. Yet she had almost a distinguished manner—the upward lift of her head and a black braid which she wore around her forehead were very becoming to her.

"What are we waiting for?" said the priest.

"Someone who also wants to go to town is coming towards the shore. If you permit me, father—it won't take long—I shall wait for her.

At this moment the girl appeared behind the wall.

"Laurella?" said the priest. "What business has she to do in town?"

Anthony shrugged his shoulders. The girl came over to the bark with her head bowed.

"Good day, Laurella," shouted some of the young fishermen. They would have said more to her because the silent and stubborn manner in which the girl received their greeting seemed to have inflamed them, but the presence of their priest held them quiet.

"Good day, Laurella," said the priest. "Do you want to go to town with us?"

"If you will permit me, father."

"Ask Anthony. He is the patron of the bark. Is not everyone master over his own property and is not God the Lord for all of us?"

"There is my fare," said Laurella, without even looking at the young fisher.

"You need it more than I do," muttered Anthony, busy pushing baskets of oranges together in order to get room for another seat. He expected to sell the oranges in town, because the small markets there did not carry sufficient fruits for the need of the inhabitants.

"I don't want a free trip," the girl replied, and moved her black eyebrows independently.

"Come, my child," said the father. "He is a brave man and does not want to get rich from your poverty. Yet, get in—and sit down next to me. Look—he has put his coat down on the seat to make it more comfortable for you. He did not do that for me. But enough—with young folks it is always like that. For one little woman there is always more love than for ten priests.

Oh, no, you need not apologize, Anthony; it is by God's arrangements that equal holds to equal."

In the meantime Laurella pushed the jacket aside and occupied her seat. Anthony did not pick it up but murmured something between his teeth. Then he pushed powerfully against the seacoast and the little bark set agoing.

"What do you carry in that bundle?" the priest asked, while they sailed across the sea which was clearing from the fog.

"Silk, cotton, and bread, father. I am to sell the silk to one woman in town and the cotton to another."

"Have you spun it yourself?"

Yes, sir."

"If I remember rightly, have you not learned to make ribbons?"

"Yes, I have, but my mother is still sick so I cannot often leave the house, and we cannot afford to buy our own weavers."

"So your mother is getting worse? When I saw her Easter she was sitting up and feeling well."

"The spring is always a bad season for her. She has lain in bed for years now, always in pain."

"Do not stop praying, my child, and the Holy Mary will help you. Be brave and diligent . . . your prayer will be granted by God." After a pause he said, "What was it they called you when you came down to shore?"

The girl's face was red and her eyes were sparkling. "They have their joke with me because I do not dance or sing like other girls. They should let me alone; I am not doing anything wrong."

"But you should be more friendly with everyone. Those who take life easy may dance and sing, but a friendly word is suitable even from those who are in grief."

Laurella stared before her, pulling her eyebrows together as if she wanted to hide her black eyes beneath them. No one said a word and they sailed in silence for some time. The sun stood magnificently over the sea. The high peaks rose, blue and gray into the clouds. From the shore, white houses gleamed out of green orchards. As the bark sailed farther and farther away, they became smaller, until one could see only small dots in the background.

"Have you ever heard from that painter again, Laurella—the man who asked you to marry him?" said the priest, breaking the silence. "He came to draw a picture of you. Why did you refuse him?"

She shook her head. "What should he want my picture for? Are not other girls much prettier than I am? And who knows what he would have done with it. He could have bewitched me with it and injured my soul or even put me to death, my mother said."

"Do not believe in such sinful things," said the priest earnestly. "Are we not always in the hands of God? Without his will not a single hair may fall from your head. And should a human being with a picture in his hand be stronger than God himself? You know that he only wished the best for you, or else he would have never asked you to marry him."

She was silent again.

"And why did you refuse him? He is supposed to be a brave man, and handsome, too. Don't you think he could have supported you and your mother better than you do it now with your little trade of spinning wool and linens?"

"We are poor," she said imploringly, "and my mother is always ill. We would have been a burden for him. And I am not good enough for him. Before his friends, he would have been ashamed of me."

"What are you saying! I told you that he is a good man. And besides, he was willing to move to your town. I hope you won't be sorry some day. Chances like that are very rare."

"I don't ever want a man," she said obstinately.

"Have you made a vow, or do you expect to go into a nunnery?"

She did not answer.

"The people are right when they hold your wilfulness against you. Do you know that you are not the only person on earth, and that, with your stubborness, you make the life and illness of your mother more bitter? What reason do you have to turn down everybody who is willing to help you and your mother? Answer me, Laurella!"

"I have a reason," she said gently and hesitantly. "But I cannot say it."

"You cannot say it? Not even to me? Not to your father whom you always have trusted—who you know only wishes the best for you?"

She nodded.

"Relieve your heart, my child. If you are right, I shall be the first person to admit it. But, remember, you are young, and you don't know much about life. Perhaps later, you may be sorry for your foolish thoughts."

She threw a timid glance over to Anthony, who kept very busy rowing. The brown cap he wore almost covered his face entirely. He stared into the deep sea and seemed to be occupied with his own thoughts. The priest was aware of this little incident and moved closer to Laurella.

"You did not know my father," she whispered, and her eyes were sad.

"Your father? He died, I think, when you were only ten years old. What has your father (whose soul be in paradise) to do with your obstinacy?"

"You didn't know him, father. You don't know that he is guilty of my mother's illness."

"But how is this possible?"

"Because he treated her so badly. I remember the nights when he came home in a fury. My mother never said a word and did everything he told her to do. But he beat her so brutally that I couldn't watch it any more. I pulled the blanket over my head and pretended to be asleep; but I cried all night. And when he saw her lying on the floor that was splotched with blood he lifted her up and kissed her like a savage. Then my mother cried for fear he might choke her. My mother kept me from talking to anyone about this; but it weakened her so that she became ill and has never recovered since the death of my father. I know well who killed her."

The little priest nodded his head. He seemed undecided how far he should admit that his penitent was right. Finally he said: "Forgive your father as your mother has forgiven him. Do not fasten your thoughts on those sorrowful pictures of the past, Laurella. Better times will come to you and make you forget everything."

"Never shall I forget this," she said, and shivered. "And that is why I don't want to marry—because I do not want to be submissive to anyone. If anyone should try to beat or kiss me now, I should know how to defend myself from him. But my mother could not defend herself, because she loved her husband. I shall never love anybody, so that I shall never be ill and miserable on account of him."

"Are you not a child, and do you not speak like one who doesn't know the ways of the earth? Are, then, all men as bad as your father who yielded to every caprice and passion? Have you not seen enough righteous people in your neighborhood—women who live in peace and unity with their husbands?"

"No one knew how badly my father treated my mother. She would have died rather than complain to anyone of it. And this she did because she loved him. If this is love that it closes your lips when you should cry for help, I shall never give my heart to any man."

"You are a child, and you do not know what to say. The time will come when your heart will ask you if you want to love or not. Then you won't be able to resist, and everything you have put into your head will be air. And that painter—do you think he could be cruel to you?"

"He looked at me so strangely—the way my father looked at my mother when he took her in his arms and begged her to forgive him. I know those eyes. Only he can have them who is brutal enough to beat an innocent wife. I shuddered when I saw those eyes again."

She was silent, and the priest was silent, too. After they had sailed for two hours they reached the small harbor. Anthony lifted the priest and carried him over the last few waves to set him on shore. Laurella did not wait for him to come back, but pulled the skirts over her knees, took her wooden shoes in one hand and the bundle in the other and waded to shore.

"I am going to stay in town today, Anthony. Don't wait for me. I probably will be back tomorrow."

"And you, Laurella, when you get home give my compliments to your mother. I shall come to see her some time next week. Are you going home before night or not?"

"I shall if I have the opportunity," said the girl while she was arranging her skirt.

"You know that I have to go back," said Anthony. "I'll wait for you until late and shan't care if you don't come."

"You must go," said the priest. "You cannot leave your mother alone at night. Is it far where you have to go?"

"Yes. I have to see some friends of my mother and then I must go to market."

"I must go, too. God be with thee, my child, and with thee, my son."

Laurella kissed the priest's hand and left without paying any attention to Anthony.

It was late in the afternoon. Already Anthony had sat for two hours in front of a small fisher-house. Every few minutes he jumped up and looked carefully down the roads. "It seems to me the weather is changing," he said to the housekeeper.

"Oh, no," said the woman. "It is just beginning to get nice. How is business this year?" she went on. "Have you earned more at home than we have here?"

"It would not be sufficient if I had only the business of the bark going. Once in a while I take some tourists out to the sea for fishing, but that is all. You know, my uncle is a very rich man. 'Anthony,' he said, 'as long as I live, you shall not be in need; and when I am dead, my money shall take care of you for the rest of your life!' You see, only with the assistance of my uncle can I get along."

"Well, you are a lucky man," she said.

Anthony shrugged his shoulders. "Everybody has to carry his own burden," he said, and with these words he jumped up again and observed the weather to the right and to the left, though ordinarily he would have remembered that there is only one weather-side.

"I'll bring you another bottle; your uncle may pay for this. Oh, here comes my husband. You must stay awhile and chat with him."

They watched him descending the hill with the net thrown on his shoulders, a red cap covering his curly hair. He came from town where he had sold his fish. When he saw Anthony he welcomed him heartily, sat down next to him, and began to ask questions. His wife had just brought up a bottle of red

wine when they heard steps in the sand, and Laurella came along. She nodded to them hastily and stood still, irresolute. Anthony rose.

"I must go," he said. "This is a girl from my home town, who came this morning with the priest and must go back tonight."

"Why, it is a long time until evening," replied the fisher. "Won't she have time enough to drink a glass of wine with us?"

"No, thanks. I don't drink," said Laurella,and she remained off at some distance.

"But, my dear, you have a long way to go and this wine will give you strength," the fisher said.

"Don't try to persuade her," said Anthony. "She is very thick-headed; when she doesn't want a thing she doesn't want it, and no one can talk it into her." He said farewell to the fisher, got into the bark and waited for the girl, who hesitated to approach the boat. She looked about her as if she were waiting for other people who wanted to go back home, but not a soul was there besides herself and Anthony. While she was looking for someone to come, Anthony took her in his arms and carried her like a child to the boat. Then he got in himself and in a few minutes they were in the open sea. Laurella sat in front of the boat with her back towards Anthony. Her features were now more serious than before. Her hair flowed over the short forehead, and around the line of her nose was a wilful, stubborn air. Her lips were closed tight. After they had sailed mutely for some time Laurella felt the sun burning her. She took out of her bundle a cloth, in which she had wrapped some bread because she had had no lunch. Anthony got two oranges out of one of the baskets and said: "Here is something you can eat with your bread, Laurella. Don't think that I kept them for you. They must have been lost by unloading and I found them when I put the empty baskets into the bark."

"Why don't you eat them? I am very well provided for."

"But they are very refreshing in this hot weather and you have walked so much today."

"My mother's friend gave me a glass of water in town and that has already refreshed me."

"Whatever you wish," he said and put them back into the basket. Again silence. The sea was as smooth as a mirror, and the waves hardly whispered around the keel. Even the white seabirds passed the boat silently.

"You could take those oranges to your mother," Anthony began. "We have more of them at home, and when they are gone, I'll buy some more. You give her these with my compliments."

"You don't even know her."

"Well, couldn't you tell her who I am?"

"I don't know you myself," she said.

It was not the first time she had denied him. A year ago, when the painter came to see her, there had been a Sunday when Anthony, with the other young men, played football on the grounds near Laurella's house. She met him while she was carrying a bucket of water on her head and passed him without noticing him. The painter, perplexed at first, stood still and looked after her as if he were waiting for her to apologize to Anthony. Anthony had dwelt on this little incident, and it had become public when the painter wooed her openly.

"I don't know him," she said indignantly, when the painter asked her why she had ignored him at the meeting in the big field and yet had paid attention to the football players. But ever since then she had recognized Anthony when she met him.

And now here they sat in the bark, bitter foes with their hearts beating hard. Anthony's face turned red. He threw the oars powerfully into the water so that the foam splashed over him and his lips trembled as if he were carrying on a dispute. Laurella, pretending not to notice his unrest, leaned overboard and slid her fingers through the water. Then she took the cloth off her forehead and began to comb her hair as if she were alone in the bark. They were in the middle of the sea, and no other boats were in sight. Not even a seabird disturbed the profound solitude. The coast glimmered in the far distance. The sun sank behind the hills and a slight breeze sprang up. Laurella shivered.

"Take my jacket and put it on," said Anthony.

"I am not cold."

But Anthony impatiently jumped up, threw his jacket around her shoulders, and went back to his oars.

Laurella sat motionless, ignoring the coat, and they rowed on in silence.

Presently Anthony looked around.

A thought seemed to have struck him. The redness of his cheeks gave way, and he let the oars sink to the edge of the bark. Laurella turned around and looked at him, intense but not fearless.

"I must make an end of it," Anthony said suddenly. "It is too wearisome and I wonder if I can bear it any longer. You say that you don't know me. Have you not seen me many times passing you with my heart full of things to say to you? But you made an angry face and turned your back on me."

"What did I have to speak to you about?" she answered evasively. "I knew that you were trying to get acquainted with me, but I didn't want the whole town to know it. Besides, I don't want you for a husband and not anyone else."

"No one? You won't say that always, just because you sent the painter away. You were only a child then. But there will be a time when you will be very lonesome. Then you will marry the first man who comes along."

"Nobody knows the future, and what if I did change my mind? Would it be any of your business?"

"What business of mine!" Anthony said and jumped up so that the bark swayed back and forth. "You may say that now that you know I care for you. May he miserably perish whomever you should treat better than me!"

"I have not given you my word. Is it my fault that your head is so silly? What right have you to me?"

"Oh," he cried out, "it is certainly not written anywhere; no lawyer has put it in a contract and sealed it; but I know that I have just as much right to you as I have to get into Heaven when I shall deserve it. Do you think that I can bear it when you go with someone else to church and all the girls shrug their shoulders with mocking laughter? I certainly won't stand for that."

"Do as you like; you can't scare me, no matter how hard you try. I do whatever pleases me."

"You won't speak like that any longer to me," he said, shivering over the whole of his body. "I am a man, and I won't let you ruin my life with your stubborness. Do you know that here you are in my power and that I can make you do anything I wish?"

She started with fright and looked at him very seriously. "Kill me, if you dare," she said slowly.

"One must not do things by half," he said, and his voice sounded hoarse. "There is space enough for both of us in the sea. I cannot help you, my child," he almost said it with pity. "But we must go, both of us, together and at once!" he cried aloud and suddenly seized her with both arms. In the same moment he drew back his right hand which suddenly was bleeding. With an impetuous movement, she had bitten him deeply.

"Oh, must I do what you want me to?" she said, and pushed him quickly from her. "Let's see if I am in your power." One swift motion and she was overboard and had disappeared in the depth of the sea. She came up again and began to swim towards the coast. The precipitous flight seemed to have paralyzed Anthony's mind. He stood gazing fixedly towards her as if a miracle was happening before his eyes. When he realized what he had done, he took hold of the oars and rowed with all his power after her. Very soon he caught up with her, though she swam fast.

"For Heaven's sake," he said. "Come into the boat. I didn't know what I was doing. God knows what came into me. Some lightning from the sky

touched my mind so that I burned up and didn't know either what I did or said. You needn't forgive me, Laurella, but please get into the bark and save your life."

"You cannot swim to the coast—it is too far. Think of your mother. If anything happens to you, I shall die of remorse."

With one look she measured the distance to the coast, then swam silently towards the boat. She reached the edge of the bark, and Anthony helped her get into it. She took her former seat and Anthony, content to know her safe, set a sail. Laurella wrung the water out of her skirt and her hair. Neither noticed that the jacket was no longer about her shoulders. While she was doing this, she saw bloodstains on the bottom of the boat. She noticed that his hand was still bleeding.

"There," she said and handed him her cloth. He shook his head and sailed forward. Finally she rose, walked over to him and tied her cloth around his hand. She sat down next to him, took one of the oars that was bloodstained, and rowed as hard as she could, not looking at Anthony. They were both pale and silent. Near the shore, they met fishers who greeted Anthony and teased Laurella. But neither of them heeded the fishers. The sun was beginning to set in the west when they arrived in the little harbor. Laurella arranged her skirt, which had almost dried from the sun, and went ashore. The old woman who watched them leave in the morning was there again.

"What have you done to your hand, Anthony?" she said. "For Heaven's sake, the whole boat is stained with blood."

"It isn't anything," Anthony replied. "I tore myself on a nail which stuck out on one of the oars. It will be all right by tomorrow."

Laurella said goodbye and, turning to the path, ascended the hill.

"Goodnight," Anthony called after her, without looking up. He was busy unloading the empty baskets and the ship implements. When he finished he climbed the stone steps which led to his house. There was no one in the two rooms in which he wandered back and fourth. Through the open windows came a cooling wave of air and the solitude comforted him. For some time he stood before the Virgin Mary and looked up to her devoutly. He would not pray. He did not know what to ask for. He was without hope. The day seemed burdensome to him. He longed for darkness, because he was tired and the loss of blood had weakened him more than he thought he could stand. He felt a terrible pain in his hand and sat down and took the bandage off. The wound no longer bled, but it had swollen. After he had washed it out carefully, he could see distinctly the marks of Laurella's teeth.

"She was right," he said to himself. "I was a brute and don't deserve to be treated any better. I shall send the cloth back tomorrow by someone else

because I cannot face her myself." And he washed it carefully and hung it in the window to dry. Then he threw himself on the bed and shut his eyes. The bright moon and the pain he felt in his hand awakened him. Soon he jumped up to ease the wound in cold water. Suddenly he heard a knock at the door.

"Who is there?" he called, and opened the door. Laurella stood before him. Without saying a word, she entered the room, took off her hat, and put a basket on the table.

"You came to get your cloth," he said. "You could have saved yourself all this trouble, because I intended to send it to you tomorrow."

"It is not the cloth," she answered quickly. "I went up the hill to get some herbs which are good for bleeding. Here they are." She lifted the cover off the basket.

"Too much trouble," he said. "It is getting much better, and after all I don't deserve it. Besides, why do you come here at this hour? Somebody is likely to see you! You know how people are. They talk about things they don't even know themselves."

"I don't care what people say," she spoke harshly. "But I want to see your wound and put these herbs on it. You know that you cannot work with only one hand."

"I tell you that there's no need to fuss with it."

"So—let me see it that I may believe you." She grasped his hand, which was not able to defend itself, and untied the bandage. When she saw the thick swelling, she was frightened and half cried, "For Heaven's sake!"

"It is not bad," he said. "In a day or two it will be all right."

She shook her head. "With this hand you won't be able to work for a week or more." Meanwhile, she had brought a bucket of water and began to wash the wound. He sat there patiently. Then she put the leaves of the herbs on his hand and tied the bandage around it. He thanked her and said, "If you want to do me another favor, please forgive me for what I have done to you today and forget everything I said. I do not know what happened to me. You never gave me cause to treat you so. I swear I shall never again do anything to offend you."

"I have to apologize," she interrupted. "It is all my fault. I shouldn't have been so stubborn and stung you to fury."

"Don't speak of forgiveness," he said. "You have taught me a very good lesson and I thank you for it. And now go home—here is your cloth. You may take it with you." He handed it over to her, but she stood there struggling with herself.

Finally, she said, "You lost your jacket on account of me, and I think that the money was in there for the oranges you sold. I cannot pay it back to you because we have no money. But here is the silver cross which the painter gave me when he came to see me last. I have never looked at it since and I don't care to keep it in my jewel box. You may sell it, and if it dosn't cover the sum, I will work at night when my mother is asleep and pay the rest."

"I don't want anything," he said, and gave the silver cross back to her.

"You must take it," she said. "You can't work now and earn money. There it is. I don't want to see it any more."

"Thow it into the sea if you will. I shan't care."

"It is not a present that I am making you; you have a right to accept it."

"A right? I have no right to anything from you. Whenever you meet me again, please don't look at me, so I won't be reminded of all I owe to you. And now go and let the words tonight be the last."

She put the cloth, together with the cross, into her basket and covered it. When he looked at her he saw big tears falling over her cheeks. She didn't move. "For heaven's sake!" he said, "are you ill? You shiver over your whole body."

"It isn't anything," she said. "I want to go home," and she staggered toward the door. But there she was overcome with her feelings, leaned her forehead against the post, and began to sob. Before he even caught up with her to console her, she suddenly turned around and threw her arms about his neck. "I can't stand it any longer," she cried and held him close to her the way a dying person clings to life. "I can't bear to hear you saying nice words to me and go away with all the guilt on my conscience. Beat me, trample upon me, curse me! Or if it is true that you love me after all this evil I have done to you, take me and keep me and do what you want with me; but please don't send me away from you like this!" Again she sobbed aloud.

He held her in his arms some time before he was able to utter the words, "If I still love you! Holy Mother Mary! Do you think all of my heart's blood has flowed from me through this little wound which your teeth made? Do you not feel it hammer in my bosom as if it wanted to come out to you? If you say this only to entice me or to have compassion for me, go, and I shall forget that too. You shan't think that you owe it to me because you know I suffer for you!"

"No," she said humbly, lifting her head from his shoulder. With tears in her eyes, she stammered, "I love you. I have always loved you, but I was afraid of myself and that is why I defied you. But now I want to be different. I couldn't bear it any longer—not to look at you when we accidentally met in

the street. Now I shall be yours and kiss you, too," she said, "so that you can be certain, in case you should ever have any doubt about my love for you. I want you to say, 'She kissed me, and Laurella doesn't kiss anyone except him whom she has chosen to be her husband'." She kissed him three times and then said: "Goodnight, my dear. Go to bed and rest your hand. You need not go with me home. I am not afraid of anybody except you." Then she ran through the door and disappeared in the shadow of the wall. Anthony went to the window. He stood there for a long time looking out on the sea over which the stars seemed to move to and fro.

—Erna Gilde, '37.

CHESTNUTS ON A HILL

Once
I picked up chestnuts
From underneath their mother tree
On a hill.
And got burrs in my hair,
When someone brave climbed up
And shook them there.

An old man
Buys and roasts
And sells chestnuts
From a hand cart
At a city curb.

An old and dirty man,
This chestnut vender,
But when I see
And smell his chestnuts roasting—
I remember.

—Ellen Fish, '38.

EIGHTEEN AND EIGHTY

A row of hollyhocks straight and tall
Beside a crumbling garden wall.

—*Ellen Fish, '38.*

SYMPHONY

You are a symphony to me
Of madness and despair;
You are a wild March melody
With haunting, tuneless air.

You are the crashing of the sea
On ghostly pale old rocks;
You are the mournful minor key
Of massive gates and locks.

You are my inborn symphony
Which I carry with me now;
You are my pagan melody . . .
This heat upon my brow.

—*Louise Burns, '37.*

SMOKE RINGS

Smoke rings,
Thin, gray spirals
Whirl in heavy air laden with smoke;
Then they slowly uncurl,
And silently drift in sheets
Toward the burning lamp on the table.

Men's thoughts,
Like their smoke rings,
Whirl themselves from their pipe dreams
And force through foul and stagnant barriers
To become half-formed ideas and plans—
Seeking for a light.

—*Elizabeth Griswold, '37.*

Down to Earth

ELEGY WRITTEN ON OUR COLLEGE CULTURE

The "lights out" toll the knell of parting day;
The yawning herd winds slowly from the hall;
Late ones to Central wind their weary way,
And leave the world to knockings in the hall.

Now fades the glimmering hall light on the sight,
And all the air a moaning waiting holds;
Save where the dim flash-lights dart into the night,
And creaky beds call from the distant folds.

Save that from yonder dark and ivy'd tower,
The dripping waters murmur full refrain;
The noise of those, who studying in the shower,
Disturb the fitful sleep of girls in Main.

Beneath those poor dim lights that flickering shine,
Where bend young backs in many an aching heap;
Each with her reddened eyes glued to the line,
The loyal daughters of the college weep.

The wheezy call of clangor-bringing morn,
Shoes bumping, plopping, scurrying overhead,
Clattering plates where breakfast's being born,
Shall drag them yawning from a scarce-touched bed.

Let not report cards mock their useful toil;
Their misspelled words, their punctuation blame;
Nor teachers hear with a disdainful smile,
That sleep, seducing tempter, overcame.

Late loans of notebooks neat, to those that cram;
And all that early studying ever made,
Await alike the inevitable exam!
The paths of study lead but to the grade.

—Jean Jenkins, '39.

" . . . *BELLS, BELLS, BELLS.*"

The attitude of many freshmen is that if they stay here too long they will go stark, raving mad over studies. Of course they are quite wrong, not about the madness, but about the cause. At first they cannot realize just what the cause will be, for they have been here but a short time. But by the time they are hardened criminals, that is, juniors, they will have found out that their receptor nerves have literally been torn to pieces, and they in turn have fragmented all the rest of those much disputed little things that are supposed to run us. Another thing that the junior has discovered is that the damage was not done by too much diligence over that Education course, but by the bells! From the time she is aroused in the morning to that late hour, again in the morning, when she goes to bed, she has been pushed and pulled all over the campus by a legion of armed bells that are ringing especially to see just how much she can take—sort of an experiment in testing a live wire for overload capacity.

Let us go through the day of Miss U'nme Usall. We look in upon the privacy of her room just about six-thirty. Dear little thing, she is sleeping so peacefully, not a bell on her mind. The sun, if there is one, has peeped in through the cracks of the blind and found all well and departed considerately, in order that the poor overworked maiden may get a few hours of unbelled rest (unusual sun!). But the good intentions of the sun are "foiled-again." Far off in the distance of the girl's consciousness there begins the low, insistent ringing of the bell for the dining-room girls. She tosses and turns, but the bells have begun their daily torture, and will not be put off. Again they ring, louder than before since there is a little better response on the part of U'nme, they laugh to themselves and ring again. By this time she has thrown off the layers of sleep that had done their best to protect her, and now she stares at the ceiling, her lips in a thin line and her teeth clenched. She is wondering if the bells are stuck. If they are, she decides to let someone else put paper in the clapper this time. But evidently the bells are not stuck, for they leave off ringing, and she tries to catch another half hour of sleep. But that elusive thing is quite adept at playing tag, and U'nme just catches its coat-tails as there comes into the realm of her subconscious the brazen alarm of her own clock set for seven. It has at last been allowed to tell the world of its hatred for silence and, dancing in fiendish glee, it shrieks and yells. U'nme jumps out of bed and runs quickly over to tell the clock to shut up. Then she sleepily drags around and just makes it to the dining room in time to see the doors close behind her back. Breakfast finished, she hurries to find solace in a cigarette; that pleasure is interrupted by a grinning bell. The chase has begun. She runs for the elevator, and there

the buzzer hurls its hatred at her. As she passes the office, the telephone rings. She runs all the way to Bloch, and there the late bell gives her a shove as she reaches the door of her class. From class to class during the whole morning the bells follow her. Finally, at dinner she hopes she has escaped the bells for an hour at least. No! There comes a sharp little ting-ting-ting-ting, and an announcement is to be made. The afternoon is a repetition of the morning, and finally at night she settles down to study, after the about-seven-thirty bell rings. There are no more bells due to ring now for the rest of the night. But Miss Usall is to be disappointed. One of the school belles comes in to tell of last night's date!

U'nme has spent the past hour in bed, begging sleep to close her eyes for her. Sleep acquiesces, somewhat unwillingly, and slowly—U'nme—leaves —behind——the——bells——of——the—— day——

Clangangang! Bri-i-ing! Clatter! Clang! Two o'clock in the morning—at least it seems that way, but the bells haven't gone to rest! Their final prank is a fire drill, dragging U'nme out into the cold night. The fire chief calls U'nme's name, and U'nme suddenly bursts into laughter, then screams, cries, yells, "Bells, bells, bells." She has gone crazy!

And so, my children, this little bedtime story is to warn you. "The bells'll get you if you don't watch out!"

—*Helen Elaine Garrett,* '38.

PORTRAIT OF JANE

Jane stood in the middle of the room and stormed, hair the color of pennies flung back in a disheveled mop of curls, green eyes gleaming through a film of angry tears.

"I won't wear it, I tell you, I won't!"

With a swift movement of black-enameled-tipped fingers, she ripped open a zipper, letting the slinky silver gown drop in a heap about her feet. A flash of a slender white leg sent it flying across the room.

Whirling around on silver heels, she faced her roommate—nostrils dilated, small breasts rising and falling rapidly under the new lace brassiere. When she spoke, the taut whiteness of her knuckles belied the forced casualness of her voice.

"All right," she said. "That's all. The show's over. And now will you please get out?"

She waited tensely, while her roommate rose slowly and left the room.

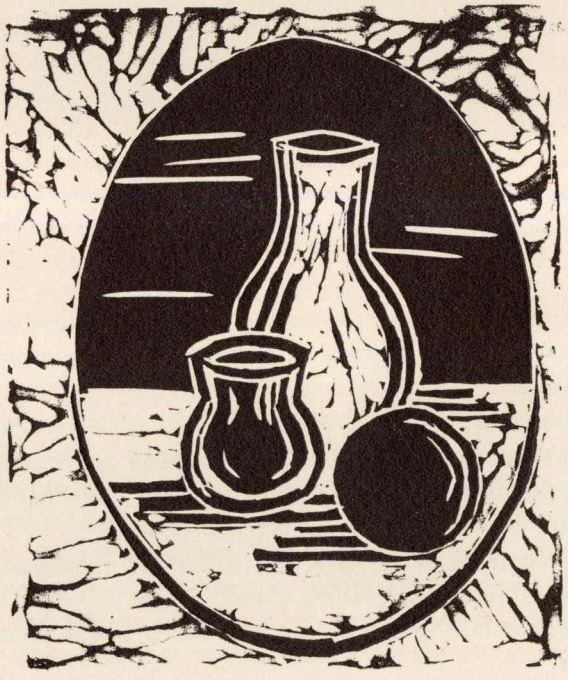
The slamming of the door seemed to break the tension of her body. She crumpled to the floor and lay there weeping, her outstretched hand clutching convulsively a fold of the silver skirt.

—*Mamie Meroney,* '38.

THE POTTERY

My hands
Are harsh and cracked
From drying clay.
On the shelves, the vessels
Of a hundred mistakes
Suggest the ancient stonecutter.
The air is dry
And around my wheel
Is white dust.

—*Aeolian McRee,* '37.



THE LEGEND OF THE MAN WITH A GOLDEN BRAIN

Adapted from an old French Legend

There was once a man who had a golden brain—yes, a brain made of gold. When he was born, the doctors thought that he could not live—his head was so large and heavy. He lived, though, but his heavy head always was weighing him down. It was very pitiful to see him bumping at every rise in the ground as he was walking. Very often he fell. Once, he stumbled along a stair and bumped on a marble step; his brain sounded like an ingot. Everyone thought that he was dead, but as they took him up, they saw a very light wound with two or three golden drops coagulated on his blond hair. It was then they noticed that the child had a golden brain.

The thing was kept secret—even the little boy himself did not know it. From time to time he asked his parents why they would not let him play and run about through the streets with the other boys. "You would be stolen, my treasure," answered his mother. And as the child was afraid of being stolen, he came back alone. Without saying a single word, but very sorrowful, days he walked here and there, bumping his poor head everywhere.

When he was eighteen, his parents told him of the wonderful treasure he possessed. As they had brought him up, they asked him for some of this gold. The child did not hesitate an instant. At once—how?—by what means?—the legend did not tell that—he tore from his brain a piece of solid gold, as big as a nut, and proudly threw it on his mother's lap.

Then, dazzled by the richness he had in his head, mad with desires, fool of his wealth, he left his parents' home and went through the world, wasting his treasure.

At this rate, since the lad scattered gold without counting it, one might think that his brain was exhaustless. It could give out, though, and slowly one saw his eyes dimming and his cheeks shallowing. One day, after a foolish debauch, he woke up, alone, amid the remains of a gorgeous banquet. The candles were almost burned out. Terrified by the enormous hole in his store of precious metal, he decided to stop his follies.

Then he started a new life—living alone, working hard. He was suspicious and fearful as a miser, flying from temptations and trying to forget his fatal riches he did not want to touch any more. Unfortunately a friend of his who knew his secret had followed him in his solitude. One night the poor man was wakened with a start by a terrible headache—oh, it was a dreadful pain! Almost mad, he raised up and saw by the moon's ray his friend running away, hiding something under his coat. Some more of the treasure was gone.

A few months later, the man with the golden brain fell in love; that was the end of everything. He was sincerely in love with a little blond girl. She loved him, too, but she rather preferred white feathers, nice dresses, and sweets. Into the hands of this pretty creature—half a doll, half a bird—the coins ran and ran. She had every wish granted. He did not dare to refuse her anything. And so as not to grieve her, always he hid from her his terrible secret.

"Are we very rich?" she said.

"Oh, yes; very rich," answered the poor man; and he smiled lovingly at the little blue bird who innocently was eating his brain.

From time to time, he did try to be more saving; but his little wife would come to him and in a delicious voice she would say, "My dear little husband, who is so rich, please do buy me something very expensive."

And he bought her something very expensive.

That lasted two years; then one morning the little woman died. No one knew why. Like a bird in the middle of her happy song she vanished. The treasure was almost at its end; the widower spent all that he had to give her a magnificent burial. Services, black velvet cloth with silver tears spread on the carriage, flowers—nothing could be too costly for her. He did not care any more for his gold. He gave it to the church, to the beggars, and to the poor. When he left the church-yard, there was nothing left from his golden brain but a few pieces on the sides of his skull.

Then he went walking and wandering through the streets, stumbling like a drunken man. In the evening, when the shops lighted their windows, he stopped before one where were spread laces, dresses, and ribbons. For a long time he looked at a pair of lovely blue silk slippers with a white eider edging.

"I know someone who would love to wear these slippers," said he to himself, smiling. And already forgetting that his wife was dead, he walked into the shop to buy them.

From the back of the shop, the storekeeper heard a scream. She ran—then shrank back, terrified. A man was standing before the counter, looking at her painfully, with a block-head air. One of his hands held the blue slippers with the white eider edging; the other was bleeding with golden pieces in the nails.

Here is the legend of the man with a golden brain—

Though it looks fantastical, this legend is entirely true . . . In the world there are many poor men condemned to live by their brains, to pay with golden coins from their marrows and substances, for everything in life. Each day is for them a recurring pain; when they are tired of suffering . . . they die.

—*Monique Baillet,* '37.

TOO MUCH?

Is it too much to ask
That I forget reality
In human death,
And still remember beauty
Dreaming silently beneath the earth?

—*Nell Dix, '37.*

SUMMER'S MADNESS

Summer's madness, cynics call it,
Summer's gladness, I repeat it;
While this music is within me,
And this glory in my feet.

Ah! too soon I know 'twill vanish,
Leaving only sadness there—
But while joy is yet remaining,
Come, Love, kiss me while I dare!

—*Nell Dix, '37.*

THE MOTHER

I've watched you growing many years, through days
Of pushing eager blades from rain-blessed earth;
(Phenomenal, that growth, to love-blind eyes
Whose jealous guard kept out the frost and drought)—
Through months of silence, while searching roots pierced deep,
Until they found a spring beneath the sod
And scorned my feeble care.
I've watched you leap
Up latitudes of air, straining nearer God—
Secure and proud you stood, by all adored—
Forgetting rake and hoe and back-bent hours
Which pinioned me to earth while others soared.
Your flower out of reach, my pride bent down
To choke your stalk which fell inert.—I cried
To feel again the pain more dear than pride.

—*Marjorie Walton, '37.*

ADOLESCENCE

"No, mother. Don't come in quite yet. I want to come downstairs all dressed. I'll be down in a minute," Jean Maxwell sang out happily as she twisted her wrist to peer at her watch. She stood up to get a hurried last view of herself before a full length mirror. Shucks! She knew her mother would have her dress cut off too short; it didn't drag the floor at all and didn't have even the tiniest train. She certainly needed one during the Grand March. Oh, well—she wouldn't get her dress all dirty around the bottom.

Jean leaned over closer to the mirror. "I believe I need on a little more rouge and a wee bit more lipstick. I know all the older girls will have on lots —and they get good rushes too!"

She went back over to the dresser and picked up her lipstick. She didn't see why she shouldn't get a good rush tonight—at least enough not to get stuck; she had nice blonde curls, blue eyes, and long lashes that looked much longer with the new mascara. Her skin had entirely cleared up for this occasion, thank goodness. All the boys liked her—but they didn't dance with her much—'cause—'cause she just *couldn't* dance! How could she tell when boys were going to take a little extra step or dip down? Nope, she reckoned she never would be a good dancer, or maybe she'd learn when she was older. Maybe it was easier *after* you were fifteen.

But anyway, at a truth meeting once, the boys had told her that her friendliness and her ability to carry on an interesting conversation (so many her age *couldn't* do *that*) and all her personality made her very likeable; at least that was something. If she had all these assets, maybe—Oh, but she just couldn't dance! The moment she got on a dance floor every muscle in her body grew taut and her feet positively refused to do anything except that old-fashioned two-step her Daddy had taught her. But she was going to be so limber tonight that the boys would stare hard to see if they weren't dancing with some ethereal nymph—Oh, if they would—she'd feel so—exotic (She'd have to look up that word before she nonchalantly sprung it on Bill!)

Heavens! There was the door bell. Bill was exactly on time. Jean grabbed her evening bag. As she passed a chair she snatched her wrap off of it and was at the top of the stairs immediately. She heard her mother's voice. Good Lord! She was asking Bill to bring her home early—as if she were a mere *child*. Oh; her mother was hopeless. Now she had to get down the stairs in those high-heeled slippers. She would kind of swagger or swoop (which would be safer in those shoes?) down the stairs right into her date. Um, where had she heard that?

"Hello, Bill, I hope I haven't kept you waiting very long. Goodnight, Mother. See you later," she drawled nonchalanty (she hoped) as she started to take Bill's arm.

Her mother cut in quickly, "But, darling, you haven't even seen Daddy yet. You'll excuse her a moment, won't you, Bill?" *Darling* me as if I were a baby! Heck, Mother doesn't want Daddy to see me. She's got some last minute advice, that's all. Jean petulantly slouched down the hall.

Just as they got inside the door, her mother whispered tensely, "Jean, you've got too much rouge and lipstick. Why, honey, you look like a painted old woman of forty." Then quickly, "Your hair and eyes are well done, but let's put on a little more powder." She did so with hard strokes that left the puff very red. Then she removed some of the lipstick from sulkily limp lips.

Jean was practically ready to burst into tears. Doggone it! She wished her mother would let her alone. She thought she'd done a good job on her face. Well, by George, she'd put it back on at intermission, she would!

Mrs. Maxwell, with pronounced misgivings, read Jean's perturbed thoughts.

As they went out the door, she called to them, "I suppose it will be all right if you stay until one *this* time."

—*Clara Merrill,* '39.

SATISFACTION

White trillium
Covers the side of the hill.
A brook runs
Helter-skelter
At the bottom.
What more could one hill want?
White raiment,
Dancing feet.

—*Ellen Fish,* '38.

SOLITARY STATE

When sitting down to sorrow,
    Move all books.
Let no tall candle kindle
    Its rich flame;
Or you will find yourself
    With heart quite whole,
And with no sorrow worthy
    Of the name.

—*Eleanor Smith,* '38.

A THOUGHT

I have not seen the pall of death
On shadowed brow of one beloved,
Nor learned the way the earth goes round
The planets, mute and far removed;
I have not wandered deep in books,
Nor strayed through towns I'd like to see—
Can I, grown tired of day and night,
Complain that nothing's new to me?

—*Edna Weaver,* '39.

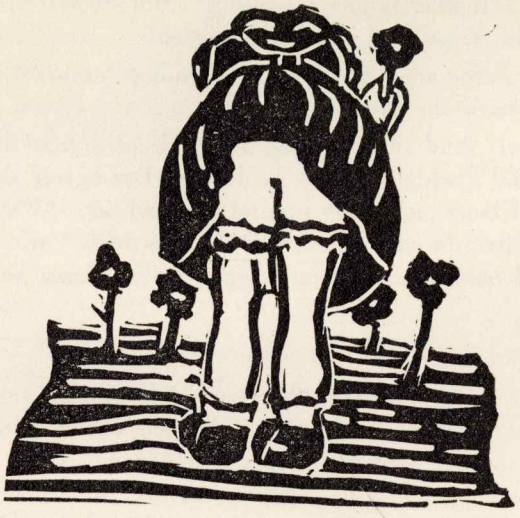
FOR THIS

No one knows this place but me—
How close the waves will creep
In the spiraling curves of an opened fan
Whose foam-laced edges touch my feet.

These cliffs, which jut into the sky
Like gaunt shoulder blades, are mine:
This driftwood left with age-whitened bones
No other hand will ever find.

I lost a world I did not own,
Where hollow raptures are bought by pride,
For this—a place of cliffs and sea,
Where nothing changes but the tide.

—*Marjorie Walton,* '37.



FOOTS

Twenty-second Street was one of those "in-between" streets—in between the Nice section of town and the Not-so-Nice section. The houses all bore a family resemblance to each other and looked as if they had been built from the same pattern—which they had. Each house had a fenced-in backyard with a dirt path leading out to the alley, and a hedged-in front yard with a flagstone path leading out to the sidewalk. A row of young trees straggled disconsolately down the length of the street, adding no beauty, but still taking away some of the bareness. The houses in the upper part of Twenty-second Street, the part verging on the Nice section, possessed clean coats of paint, shining windows, and gravelled driveways that led out to prim little garages. They looked like freshly scrubbed small boys with clean clothes and straight ties. The houses in the lower part, near the Not-so-Nice section, were like little boys with dirty faces and shaggy hair.

At least that was the way Foots summed it up.

Foots was eight years old and lived in the second house in the upper part of Twenty-second Street. Mama kept Foots as clean and shining as the windows of her house, and was very particular about Foots' playmates. Maxine and Wynn, in the first house, were just as clean as Foots, so Mama allowed her to play with them. But about the other neighborhood children, Mama had her doubts.

This morning Foots was working in her flower garden, a ten-foot square of ground between her house and Maxine and Wynn's. Weighty problems were bothering Foots today. Mama had spanked her for imitating, in front of Daddy, the dance Maxine had performed at the regular Saturday afternoon show out in the garage. Foots had been fascinated by Maxine's slow sinuous movements as she pulled her clothes off, one by one, in the process of the dance. Sick with envy, Foots had been deeply thrilled when Mazine had fallen to the floor in an exhausted heap at the end of the dance. Afterwards she had coaxed Maxine to teach her the dance. Maxine hadn't wanted

to, because she was afraid Foots' mother might not like it. But Foots could see no reason why Mama would object and had been insistent.

"Mama *wants* me to dance," she argued. "Isn't she sending me to Miss Carlton's to learn how? You *know* she won't mind."

So Maxine had taught her. And this morning Foots decided that the time was ripe to show Mama and Daddy what she could do. But before she had gotten well into the dance, Mama picked her up and spanked her. When Mama demanded, "Where on earth did you learn that? I know Miss Carlton didn't teach you," Foots could only sob, "Maxine taught me." Mama had been horrified.

"Where *she* could have come across it, *I* don't know," she said.

As Foots pulled up her fireplants to see if they were still growing, she grinned elfishly. *She* knew where Maxine had learned it, but she wasn't going to tell. Nez Thornton, their mother, had let Wynn and Maxine go to a party with her and Gilbert, week before last. Gilbert was one of the men who came to see Nez. She had left them in charge of the maid, and the children had gone to sleep. The noise of the party had wakened them, however, and they had crept to the door and peeped. Afterward Wynn had related with glee: "'n there was a girl dancing, 'thout any music. She'd already pulled off her dress, and was waving it 'round her head, real slow, and was started on her ba-*zeer* when Mattie jerked us 'way from the door and put us back to bed. Mother never did know we saw it."

Foots sighed. Maxine and Wynn had the *most* fun. They were always getting to go places with Nez, and sometimes they got to stay up late when Nez gave a party. Mama never went to parties like the ones Wynn and Maxine always told about. Mama just sat at a table with some more ladies and played cards and talked. She didn't go out with any men like Nez did either —just Daddy. Foots wished Mama were more like Nez. Nez was her idol! She wore the prettiest clothes; her hands were soft and white, and her nails were pinky and shiny all the time. Her hair was never out of place like Mama's was after she cooked dinner, and she smelled so good! Mama smelled good too, when she dressed just before Daddy came home from The Office, but Mama's smell wasn't like Nez's. Mama's was like violets (Daddy loved violets), but Nez's was like—like—Foots didn't know what. It was beautiful! Wynn had told her it was "Love's Sin," out of a little bottle, but then— Wynn exaggerated so.

"Foot-see! Come hee-ah!" Doggone it, Mama was calling her. Foots threw down the zinnia she was transplanting and muttered, "What th' Sam Hill does she want?" (Daddy said "Sam Hill" sometimes.) She stomped into the house, pouting.

"Darling, take this up to Vic's and tell her Mother will send the rest next week," Mama said sweetly, handing Foots some money.

Foots stood firmly, forcing the pout to stay on her face. "Darling!" If Mama thought she could get away with that! Spank her one minute and pet her the next! It wasn't right.

"Is Muvver's ittle dirl till mad at her?" Mama cooed. Foots said nothing. Mama reached out and gently plopped Foot's lower lip. Foots giggled. She invariably did, when Mama did her that way.

"Aw-w-ww, Mama," Foots said reproachfully, "I'm trying to stay mad at you."

Mama laughed. "You can have a nickel of the money," she said.

Foots ran out of the house. Stopping next door, she called Wynn, "C'mon, go up to Vic's with me."

"Who's Vic?" Wynn wanted to know.

"Don't know Vic! Where've you been? Vic's our nigger washwoman!" Foots answered in disgust.

"Oh—her." Wynn was reluctant. "I don't know whether Mother'll let me or not," she said.

"I got a nickel," Foots said invitingly.

"Oh—wait'll I get my hat." Wynn dashed into the house and came out with a bright-red crownless cardboard hat perching precariously on her head.

They walked in silence for a little while. Then: "Wynn, you know that dance Maxine taught me?"

"Yeah."

"Mama spanked me for doing it."

"Serves you right. Maxine told you your mother wouldn't like it. We heard you crying, and Max said she bet that 'uz was it was."

"You know, I didn't think there was anything bad about it, if Nez watched a grown girl do it at a party."

"'NEZ!' Don't you call her Nez! You're too little. Anyway, that's different."

A long sleek automobile skipped by. It's horn tooted and a hand waved. Wynn waved in answer.

"Who was that?" Foots asked.

"Gilbert—didn't you know him?" Wynn grew dreamy-eyed. "You know, Foots, Gilbert loves Mother."

"Aw—shoot!" Foots said. "You mean he likes her."

"No, he loves her," Wynn insisted. "He loves her, and she loves him."

"D'd they tell you that?"

"No, but the other evening when he came to see Mother, Maxine and I stayed in the hall next to the living-room and listened. Gilbert told Mother he loved her, and Mother said that she loved him too."

"Sure nuff?" Foots was thrilled beyond words. This was like the movies!

"Yeah. 'n he kissed her, too, when he left."

"Hmph. That's nothing. I saw him do that long time ago."

"How come?"

"Mama and I were coming home from Granddaddy's one night, and when we passed yall's house, they were on the porch. Mama saw it, too. —You know, Wynn, I wish Mama was more like Nez."

"'*Nez*'? What'd I tell you?"

"Oh well, your mother then. Anyway, I wish Mama 'uz more like her. She's so popular, 'n pretty. When I get grown, I'm gonna be that way. I'm going to parties 'n dances, 'n drink cocktails, 'n go swimming at night, 'n just go ever'where!" Foots stopped, out of breath, and looked angrily at Wynn. Wynn was engrossed in her own thoughts and hadn't been listening. Foot's ambition was an old story to Wynn. She had heard over and over what Foots intended to do "when she got grown."

They were at Vic's house now, in nigger town. Vic's house shone brightly in comparison with the other houses on the block. Foots kicked on the door. It opened, and a big fat negro woman grinned out at them.

"Well, well, well! If it ain't my lil old Footsie! Come in heah, chile!" She picked Foots up and squeezed her. Wynn looked on in disdain. Vic led them into her spic and span kitchen and after fumbling in the cupboard, drew out a large jar of doughnuts.

"Heah, honey. Help yo'selfs," she invited.

"We can't stay long, Vic. I just came to give you this money for the washing. Mama said she'd send the rest next week," Foots told her.

"Thanky, honey. But you tell yo mama she neenta worr'd 'bout that money. Old Vic knowed she'd git it some day."

"All right." Foots edged toward the door.

"Heah, take some mo' doughnuts," Vic urged. "They was made specially f'you. Why don't you come to see me mo', honey?"

"I don't have much time, Vic," Foots explained. "We've started on the mu'plication tables now, and I have to study s'hard. But if I ever have time again, I'll come."

"I'll be mighty glad to see you."

"We've got to go now, Vic. G'bye."

"Bye, honey."

Foots and Wynn walked away. Foots looked back. Vic was still standing in the door, watching them.

"We oughta stayed a little while," Foots said guiltily. "Mama said Vic always called me 'her baby'."

"We didn't have to. She's just a nigger," Wynn airily replied. "Let's spend your nickel," she suggested. They went to the corner store, bought candy, and loitered on the way home.

The afternoon passed swiftly and pleasantly for Foots, as it always did when she played in the playhouse with Wynn and Maxine. But she didn't get to play long, because the girls went to their Grandaddy Thornton's house to spend the night. "Y'all don't have to go so early, do you?" Foots asked. It seemed that they did have to go early. Mama Thornton always let them have a tea party if they came in time.

That night Gilbert's car was parked in front of Nez's house again. Foots saw it as she went to bed. She heard the strains of "Always" from Nez's radio and knew they were dancing. When she raised up in bed and leaned 'way over, she could see quite plainly through Nez's heavy lace curtains into the living-room. Gilbert and Nez made a single shadow as they danced. Foots grew pensive. Oh—if she were only like Nez! Wynn and Maxine didn't know how lucky they were to have her for a mother. The melody from the radio had changed now to "Lights Out." Gilbert and Nez were standing right in front of the window, not dancing, but still embracing. Gilbert bent his head slightly, and Nez lifted hers. Foots counted. One-two-three-four and on 'til—Goodness, that was three times as long as Daddy kissed Mama! They were dancing again now, and the music continued. Then abruptly the light in Nez's living room went out. Foots felt as though the door had been shut between her and fairyland. She sighed, yawned, and snuggled back in bed.

Foots' dreams were disturbed much later that night by the scream of sirens and the clanging of bells. Foots woke, cold with fear. Fire sirens always frightened her. She got up quickly and ran into Mama's room. Mama and Daddy were already up. Daddy hurriedly put on his dressing gown, and together they all went out on the back porch. Everything glowed red.

Over in the next block, separated from them only by a narrow alley, two houses were on fire. Great volumes of smoke, grey against the night and tinged with red, boiled up from the roofs, while sharp tongues of flame darted out and licked the buildings hungrily. Streams of water from firemen's hose did little good toward quenching the fire, which seemed in danger of spreading to the other houses.

"Want to go out there?" Daddy asked.

"We can go as far as the alley," Mama replied.

"Here Footsie, let me carry you," Daddy said and started to pick Foots up.

"No," she said petulantly, "I wanna ride on your back."

Foots rode on Daddy's back to the alley. After standing there a while, watching the fire, they moved down a few feet by Nez's garage and stood in its shadow.

A shout of alarm burst from the people gathered on the other block, and the Morleys saw that another house had caught fire. Mama bit her lip nervously. "We'd better take Foots back in the house," she said to Daddy.

"No, Mama, please don't," Foots begged, her face aglow. "This is fun."

"Well—just a few minutes more," Mama consented.

The fire was threatening to spread to another row of houses, when Foots heard steps and whispers behind them. She glanced back. Nez and Gilbert were coming down the back path. Nez looked so strange. Her hair was all rumpled up, and she had on a sleek pink something with fluffy white fur on it. Gilbert was in shirt sleeves, his collar was unbuttoned and he had on no tie.

"He looks like Daddy," Foots thought, "when he goes to sleep in his chair and Mama wakes him up." Queer thought—she guessed Gilbert had gone to sleep in his chair and had forgotten to go home.

Gilbert and Nez came closer, peering around the garage cautiously. Nez jumped when she saw Mama and Daddy and Foots. "Oh," she gasped. "We didn't see you!"

"Uh—do you think the fire will spread to our block?" Nez made conversation.

"It may," Mama said, and she and Daddy took Foots' hands and led her back in the house. Mama's lips were tight together. Foots looked over her shoulder. Gilbert and Nez, their faces reflecting the scarlet of the fire, were gazing at each other in consternation.

"The hussy!" Daddy muttered. "His reputation already smells to high heaven. And her with two kids!"

Foots went to sleep and dreamed beautiful dreams in which she, wearing fluffy pink somethings, and looking very much like Nez, danced with young men who might have been pocket editions of Gilbert.

Several days later, in the afternoon after Foots came home from school, a car drove up in front of her house, and the two men who got out came up the flagstone path.

Mama peeped out the window. "Tell them I'm not at home, Foots," she said, and ran in the living room. Foots obediently went to the door, and in answer to the gentlemen's inquiry, informed them that Mama and Daddy

weren't at home. No, she didn't know when they'd be in. Probably sometime tomorrow or next week.

"We'll wait," one of the men announced and sat down in the swing.

"Oh, come now, Mr. Thornton, we can't," said the other.

"But we can," the first answered decisively. He lit a huge cigar. The other man gingerly sat down beside him.

Foots sat on the steps and pulled her dress 'way down over her knees as she stole little glances at the two visitors. The little bent-over one, with the white hair and wrinkles, would be Wynn and Maxine's granddaddy, she thought. He came to see them often. She had never seen the tall lanky man before. The way he blew smoke out of his long nose was nothing short of lovely! "It's like a smoke-stack," Foots thought, "except it's not straight—and it smells different."

"—and if we can get this woman to tell what she surely must know," Granddaddy Thornton was saying, "it's a cinch!"

("A cinch?" Foots puzzled silently. "Oh—bedbugs!")

"—Got no right to keep those kids, carrying on the way she does." Granddaddy Thornton was puffing furiously at his cigar now. He seemed to have forgotten Foots. "Hasn't been more than two years since Mark died. I'm not going to have it, I tell you! If this keeps on, there's no telling how those little things will grow up. Liable to have their minds polluted.

("Polluted? What in the world?" Foots thought.)

"But, as I said, if Mrs. Morley will talk, the case is a cinch," Granddaddy Thornton continued. He slapped his thigh emphatically.

("A cinch! Still talking about 'em," Foots said to herself. "I'd better go tell Mama.") Aloud she said, "Excuse me, please; I think I'll go in."

Foots found Mama sitting by the open window that overlooked the porch.

"Sh-h-h," Mama warned, putting her finger to her lips. Foots tiptoed in.

"Mama," she said in a stage whisper, "they're talking about bed-bugs. Do they want to sell you something to get rid of 'em?"

"Sh-h-h, you wouldn't understand."

"Hadn't we better ask 'em in? Looks as if they're going to stay," Foots observed sagely.

"No, I want them to leave," Mama said.

After a barren wait, the men went away. Mama gave Foots' questions no satisfactory answers.

"You wouldn't understand!" Foots repeated scornfully to herself. "Who does Mama think I am? One of Mrs. Guin's new twins?"

She pondered over the incident for a whole hour, then gradually forgot it. But the next night, before Daddy came home, the same car pulled up in

front of the Morley's house again. Mama didn't make Foots go to the door, but went herself, and invited the men into the living room. Foots decided she'd study her mu'plication tables in there tonight and ensconced herself in Daddy's big chair.

After the weather had been settled beyond dispute, Mr. Thornton leaned forward in his chair and said, "Well, Mrs. Morley, I suppose we might as well get down to brass tacks. You know why we're here, of course?"

("Mama's trying to look innocent," Foots thought.)

"Yes, Mrs. Morley," the long thin man was saying, "I think you can help us a great deal, if you just will. Naturally, we expect you to come forward with anything you might know."

"Really, I don't know anything of importance—anything that could be used against her. She has aways been a good neighbor to me, and I think lots of her. I don't know anything about the man except that he is over there much of the time. I used to know his wife quite well, but I haven't seen her for some time now. I feel that I should have nothing to do with this case, because Inez's private affairs do not concern me." Mama was very earnest, and had grown red in the face.

"But Mrs. Morley, you don't seem to understand. Don't you see that if this affair with a married man continues—and practically everybody in town knows of it—the children's morals may be affected? Growing up in a home where the mother has no more moral sense than a rabbit—what chance have they to become respectable citizens? And the stigma that will be attached to their mother's name—think of that! No, it isn't our purpose to draw attention to the affair simply for notoriety's sake, but to show that in having it, she is morally unfit to keep the children."

Mama was still reluctant. "To whom will custody of the girls be given?" she asked.

"Naturally, since they are my son's children, *I* want them. That is why I'm bringing the suit," Mr. Thornton told her. "Now, won't you be reasonable?" he wheedled. "We've already seen a few of the other neighbors, and they've agreed to testify. All we lack is your testimony."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Thornton, but my decision remains the same," said Mama, and she stood up. The visitors stood up too, and started toward the door.

"Good-night," Mama said.

The long thin man paused at the door, and said, "Well, Mrs. Morley, I regret that you have taken this attitude, but I am confident that a subpoena will change your outlook. Good-night." And the two left the house.

Mama stood looking after them a moment, then went over to Foots and hugged her tight.

"Mama, what's the matter?" Foots asked in bewilderment. Big tears were rolling down Mama's cheeks, and her lips were quivering. "What were they trying to make you say?" Foots patted Mama's back soothingly, like Daddy patted hers when she cried.

"Nothing, darling," Mama choked and squeezed Foots again: "Oh, that poor thing! What will she do without her babies?"

That night Foots lay awake a long time—almost half an hour. It was lodge night, and Daddy wouldn't be home till late. Mama went to bed with Foots and held her very close, as she had done when Foots was small. Mama was asleep now, but Foots' hand kept patting her shoulder gently, because Mama gave little sobs in her sleep. Foots was worried. "What were they trying to make her say?" she wondered. "And whose babies was she talking about?"

"Since they're my son's children, I want them . . . " Mr. Thornton's words drifted through her sleepy thoughts. For an instant it flashed into her mind that Nez and Wynn and Maxine had been the subject of the discussion. But she dismissed the thought. Wynn and Maxine weren't babies! . . . Foots went to sleep patting Mama's back.

The next morning a man came and gave Mama a piece of paper. Mama did not open it, but held it in her hand and stared into space a long time.

"Aren't you going to open it, Mama?" Foots asked curiously.

"No, I know what it says," Mama replied dully.

"Tell me?"

"Mama's got to go to court and answer a lot of questions, dear," Mama told her. Foots couldn't understand why Mama didn't want to do that! Why —going to court would be an adventure.

But Mama seemed to think differently. When Daddy came home, she told him all about it, mentioning no names and speaking *sotto voce* so as not to disturb Foots, who was diligently studying her mu'plication tables.

Foots privately thought Mama was acting awfully queer about the whole thing. She'd been glad to go to court last year when that man bumped into their car and broke the windshield. Six tums six is thirty-six . . . But that hadn't been about babies. Mama was funny that way. She never discussed babies in front of Foots. Tootums seven's fourteen . . . Who did Mama know that had babies? There was Mrs. Guin, across the street, with her new twins . . . But who would want to take the little old squalling things away from her? Surely not Daddy Thornton. No, it didn't work out. Foots' suspicion that the affair concerned Wynn and Maxine began to grow bigger and blacker. Twelvetums nine . . . She slammed the 'rithmetic book down. She'd go right now and ask Mama. Mama would *have* to tell her this time.

As Foots put her hand on the doorknob to Mama's room she heard Mama talking . . . Daddy was in the living room . . . Mama must be telephoning. Foots waited and listened. Mama wouldn't mind, she guessed. But gosh, what was this Mama was saying?

"Yes, we got one, too. Isn't it a mess? Mr. Thornton and his lawyer were here the other night trying to pump me, but I played innocent. Didn't know a thing . . . but I got a subpoena anyway . . . Yes, I think it would be better for them to have a different environment . . . especially Maxine . . . Actually, the things they know would shock you . . . Why, Foots picked up a perfectly *scan*-dalous strip dance from Maxine. I spanked her for doing it, but Guy just laughed . . . I'm afraid they'll influence her more than that, but I wouldn't breathe it to Inez for anything . . . "

Foots heard no more. Her hand dropped from the knob. So it *was* about Maxine and Wynn! She went to her room and lay down on the bed. They couldn't do this to Nez! Nez, who was so pretty, who had such lovely hands, who was so witty and popular. Why, how could they take Wynn and Max away? They just did that to people who were mean to their kids. The vague and ominous *They* had taken Mr. Delancey's little boy from him last year. Mr. Delancey lived at the Other End of their street, and Mama said he didn't know what water was, either way. But Nez—*Nez* wasn't like that. Why, Maxine and Wynn had more fun than any kids in their room at school. They got to wear rouge and lipstick—'course, not *much,* but it was rouge 'n' lipstick just the same. They could go to every movie that came to town if they wanted to—even Mae West pictures. Mama wouldn't let *her* do that. They always had plenty of money, and bought drinks and hot-dogs, and candy, and everything else they wanted. And that matter of parties—when Max and Wynn p'tended they were scared to stay at home with just a nigger girl there with them, and cried 'n' begged a little, Nez would let them go with her and Gilbert to parties. Of course they had to go to bed, or stay in a room and play when they got there, but they could always peep, couldn't they? In view of all that, who could say Nez was mean to 'em? According to Foots' thinking, she was the best mother in the world. No, Mr. Thornton couldn't do this to them. Foots wouldn't let him!

Foots sat up. That was an idea—she wouldn't let him! Why hadn't she thought of that before? She hugged herself in glee; it was going to be simple as pie! She lay on the bed a few minutes, thinking it over, planning, and marvelling at her discovery. After a while she got up and went into the living room where Mama and Daddy were. She settled herself on the ottoman by Daddy's chair, and started again on her mul'plication tables. Gosh, wouldn't everybody be surprized when they found out that she—

"Foots, what in the world is the matter with you?" Mama broke in upon her thoughts. "Did you eat the feathers too? Look at that smug expression, Guy."

Foots felt sheepish. "I was just studying my 'rithmetic," she explained.

Daddy glanced at her. "I never knew before that an arithmetic book was funny to you," he grinned.

"Aw, it's just—Aw, I wasn't thinking about 'rithmetic," Foots confessed uncomfortably.

"So I gathered," Daddy said dryly.

Foots lay awake again that night—from excitement this time. Her plan couldn't fail, she thought. Wynn and Maxine said Gran'daddy Thornton was crazy about children, and was the best man in the world. Of course that last wasn't so, because Foots' Daddy was the best, but knowing that Gran'daddy Thornton liked kids made her plan seem all the better. Nez would just *love* her after this. It was wonderful that she had the chance to do something big for Nez.

The next afternoon a very nervous little girl walked back and forth in front of a huge cream brick house on Parkhearst Street in the Snooty-Nice part of the city. Pausing, she drew a deep breath and marched up the steps. In answer to her ring a black and white uniform opened the door.

"I'd like to see Mr. Thornton, please," Foots exhaled.

"Come in," The Uniform said. Foots followed it into a room where everything was deep-sinking chairs and divans, and softly glowing lamps.

"What is your name?" asked The Uniform.

"Sally-Ann Morley," Foots answered.

"Wait here a moment, please," and The Uniform disappeared.

Foots glanced around the room. " I didn't know Daddy Thornton lived in such a *beaut*-iful place," she thought. "Max 'n' Wynn said it was pretty, but . . . —I'm gonna have one just like it when I get grown," she decided suddenly. "Oof!" The Uniform had slipped in so quietly that Foots was startled. "Old pussyfoot!" she thought viciously.

"This way," said The Uniform with a frosty smile, and led Foots down a corridor to a room lined with shelves and shelves of books. The Uniform disappeared again.

Mr. Thornton rose from a chair by a window and advanced toward Foots. "How do you do, Miss Morley, or shall I say Sally-Ann?" he said, motioning her to a chair.

"Howyado," Foots breathed. "You can call me Foots. Everybody else does." It wasn't going to be so bad after all, she thought, twisting her hanky into a knot.

Gran'daddy Thornton became very jovial and talkative. "I believe you live next door to my grandchildren, Maxine and Wynn Thornton, don't you?" he asked.

Foots nodded. Somehow her voice wouldn't come up.

"Now, now, you mustn't be ill at ease. I'm sure we'll get along famously. Did you want to see me about something? Don't be afraid to tell me. I like little girls like you."

"I—I'm not scared," Foots assured him shakily. "But I'm afraid you won't like what I came to tell you."

"Well now, that'll never do. Go ahead and say it. I promise you I'll like it, regardless of what it is," he told her.

"It's about Maxine and Wynn. You're going to take them away from their mama, aren't you?" Foots' face was a study in concern and worry.

"Not exactly. But I suppose you might put it that way."

"You can't, though!" Foots' nervousness was gone. "Honestly, she is *so* good to them! It's not like Mr. Delancey and his little boy, 'cause Max and Wynn are always clean and they drink lots of water, and Nez doesn't beat 'em and they don't have to do the cooking, or bring in the coal, or scrub the floor, or anything like that!"

"Say, what is all this about?" Mr. Thornton demanded, when he could get a word in.

Foots explained about Mr. Delancey. "What I came for," she continued, "was to get you to not take Maxine and Wynn away from their mother. She loves 'em like everything, and she's awfully good to 'em." And Foots cited her proof in a rush of words.

"Unh-hunh, I see," Mr. Thornton said thoughtfully. "Go on."

Foots went on—for half an hour. At the end of that period she stopped. "Now you see, don't you?" she pleaded.

"Yes, Foots, I believe I do. —Foots, how would you like to go to court and tell the judge what you just told me?" Gran'daddy Thornton asked her. "I believe your testimony would do more to clear up the case than any other witnesses."

Foots stared at him. "Go to court! Why—could I really?"

"You most certainly could."

"And would I get an invitation like Mama got?"

"Invitation?" Mr. Thornton looked at her, puzzled. "Oh—" he said, his face brightening. "Yes indeed, we'll send you a formal invitation tomorrow, if that's what you want."

"Gosh!" Foots seemed as though in a trance. Her eyes were very bright. Nobody in her room had ever been to court. Not even Dorothea Agnew, who had been to New York. "Would I be important?"

"Decidedly so!" Mr. Thornton was emphatic.

"Well, I'll go, if Mama'll let me. You be sure and send that invitation so she'll know, hear?"

"I certainly shall, Foots. Would you like to ride home?"

"Oh, thanks, but I'd better walk. I've got to go to the store for Mama." With a sudden pang of conscience, "I bet she's worried about me. Well, g'bye, Mr. Thornton. We had a nice visit, didn't we?"

"Yes, yes. So we did. You must come again."

On the way home Foots held her head high. "I'm go-ingta co-urt, go-ingta co-urt" was the tuneless little song that ran through her thoughts.

Tomorrow was Saturday. Foots was glad, because now she could watch for the postman, or whoever brought her invitation.

She played paper-dolls all day, perfectly content to give up studying the eternal mu'plication tables. She couldn't be expected to work all the time, when she was an important witness in an important case! She could imagine Mama's face when she got the invitation. Hmph! Mama and Daddy weren't the only ones who got to go to court. But Mama hadn't wanted to go, much . . .

Mama's face was all Foots had imagined it when the "invitation" came. "Foots!" she exclaimed. "A subpoena for *you!* Why, what could you know about the case?"

"I donno, Mama," Foots said innocently. "Let me see it." Mama handed the paper to her. "What does it mean, Mama?" Foots asked.

"It means you'll have to go to court and answer some questions, honey. But a child getting a summons to court . . . I never heard of such a thing! Foots, sit down here beside me. I want to tell you a few things."

"Yes, Mama."

"Mr. Thornton, Wynn and Maxine's grandfather, wants to get—wants them to come live with him, and he is asking the judge if he can have them."

"Oh, I know about that. He's going to take them away from Nez."

"Why, Foots! How did you—well, listen, and Mama will explain it to you."

"Wellum."

"On account of Nez's going around with men . . . well, it's not exactly that . . . I hardly know how to explain it so you'll understand . . . and I'm not sure I want you to understand, either . . . " Mama was talking as if to herself.

"What else, Mama?"

"It all amounts to this, Foots. Mr. Thornton thinks that because Nez goes out with men, and lets the children go to grown-up parties with her, and

then doesn't look after them after they get there, that she isn't the right—isn't being motherly enough to them. They'll probably ask you some questions about Gilbert Hensley, but if you don't know the *exact answer,* say that you don't know."

"Will there be a jury and all that?"

"No, in this one there's just going to be Judge Hayes. He'll probably ask you some questions outside the court room—I never heard of a child being placed on the witness stand in a case like this. You be sure to tell the truth, hear, Foots? No little make-up stories like you tell at home."

"Why Mama!" Foots was indignant. "I always *tell* you when it's a make-believe story, don't I?"

"Yes, but I just wanted to be sure . . . "

On Wednesday of the next week, Mama and Daddy and Foots went to court. *So*-oo-o many people were there!

"I wonder if the judge will allow all of them to stay in the court room," Mama said to Daddy.

"Don't imagine so," Daddy answered. " 'S too many."

"I called Judge Hayes yesterday and asked him if he wouldn't question Foots privately, instead of having her on the witness stand. I don't want this whole town rubber-necking at her! He said he'd do the questioning himself, but that it wasn't important enough to bother about doing so outside the court room."

"Don't guess it matters much. Rather irregular, but it'll come out all right. Didn't think of it myself."

Daddy squeezed Foots' hand. "You're not going to be scared, are you, kiddie? You know ol' Judge Hayes, don't you? The one that was at Gran'-daddy's house the last time we were there? He's a nice old man."

"No, I won't be scared. I'm kinda excited though."

Mama and Daddy found seats in the front of the court room, and Foots sat between them, holding on to Daddy's hand. She saw Nez, smartly dressed in blue, at a table with some men. One of the men leaned over once in a while and whispered something in her ear.

People kept coming up to a chair near the judge's bench, one at a time, and answering questions asked by the tall thin man who had been with Gran'daddy Thornton when he came to Foots' house.

Mama had bought Foots some colored crayons and a book with pictures in it, and when the people started going up to the stand, she whispered to Foots to color in her book. Foots didn't want to much, but . . . she couldn't hear what those people were saying anyway, so she colored the pictures.

After a number of witnesses, including Mama, had taken the stand, Foots heard her own name called. She handed her crayons and book to Mama, and marched up the aisle, nearly bursting with pride. She was a wee bit frightened but found that by not looking at the mass of faces in the court room, that odd fluttering in her tummy could be controlled.

A man asked Foots her name and, telling her to hold up her right hand, mumbled something at her with a question mark on his face. Foots, because the man looked as if he expected her to, said "yes." Then the tall thin man hopped up.

Judge Hayes said to him, "I'll question this witness, Mr. Stephens."

"Very well," the man assented and sat down.

The judge turned to Foots. "Foots, come up here and sit on my desk," he said smiling benignly.

Foots did so shyly. Judge Hayes helped her up. "You live next door to Mrs. Thornton, don't you, Foots?"

Foots acknowledged that she did.

"Mr. Thornton tells me that you came to him with some valuable information the other day. Is that true, Foots?"

"Yessir."

"Will you please tell me, as nearly as you can, what you told him?"

"Yessir, I was just telling him how good Nez—Mrs. Thornton—is to Maxine and Wynn."

"Yes, yes, that's what he told me. Now, will you tell about the parties?

"Wynn and Maxine get to go to lots of parties. Nez—Mrs. Thornton always goes to parties with Gilbert—Mr. Hensley, and she hires a girl to stay with Max 'n' Wynn while she's gone. But they make out like they're afraid to stay there without Nez, and they cry and beg to go with her. So she lets 'em."

"Now, Foots, what do the children do when they get to the party? They don't join in with the merrymaking, do they?" Judge Hayes asked in a kindly tone.

"No, sir. Most times she leaves 'em with the maid to play or has her put 'em to bed. That's what Wynn said."

"Do they always stay in bed?"

"We-ell, no, sir."

"What do they do?"

"Wynn said that lotsa times they pretended they were asleep, and the maid would go away, and they would go to the door and watch the party."

"Did Wynn ever tell you anything they saw?"

"Yessir."

"What did she say?"

"Well, sometimes she said that everybody just danced. One place there was a table that everybody stood around and watched a wheel and won money. That was the time the police came."

"The police came? How was that?"

"I don't know. Maxine said Gilbert came and got them and took 'em down the back way. They were scared too."

"You mention Gilbert. Foots, do you know whether he came to see Mrs. Thornton often?"

"*Yessir!* He comes over there 'most every night, and they dance."

"How do you know?"

"I can hear the music,and I can see 'em too.

"Foots, do you remember the night that Mrs. Henderson's and Mrs. Smith's houses caught on fire?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"The fire threatened to spread over the whole block, didn't it?"

"Yessir. But Judge Hayes, I didn't tell Daddy Thornton any of this the other day!"

"That's all right, Foots; you just answer what I ask you. I'm coming to the other presently."

"Yessir."

"Now, back to the night of the fire. Do you remember anything you saw?"

"I saw the fire-reels and the people that came to the fire."

"Anything else? Think hard. Did you see Mrs. Thornton that night?"

"Oh, yes, I did. Mama and Daddy and I were out by the garage watching the fire, and she came out."

"Why did she come out, Foots? Do you remember anything she said?"

"I guess it was because she was afraid the fire would spread. It'd already caught three houses close to ours. She asked Mama if she thought the fire would spread over to our block."

"How was she dressed?"

"Mama? She had on her old dark-blue bathrobe."

No, I meant Mrs. Thornton."

Foots was enthusiastic. "Oh! She had on the prettiest pink dress—I guess it was a dress—satin, I think it was, like Mama's new blouse, but not the same color, of course. Mama's is blue, and Nez's was pink. And trimmed in white fur. It was awfully pretty."

"Foots, would you remember what time it was?"

"No, but I had already gone to sleep, and the fire-reel sirens woke me up."

"Foots, think hard on this question. Do you remember whether there was anyone with Mrs. Thornton? Be very careful in your answer."

"Yes, I remember. Gilbert was with her."

"Yes? Do you remember how he looked?"

"Not much. He was kinda sleepy-looking . . . but I don't remember what color *his* clothes were. He didn't have on a tie."

"H'mmm. Well, I don't suppose the color matters, anyway."

Mr. Stephens broke in. "Your Honor, may I ask the witness a question?" The court consented.

"Foots, will you repeat what you said to Mr. Thornton about Wynn's telling you that Mr. Hensley and Mrs. Thornton were in love with each other?"

"Oh, that! Wynn just said that she and Maxine listened one night when Gilbert came to see Nez, and Gilbert said he loved Nez and Nez said she loved him too. They both love each other, I guess."

Judge Hayes resumed the questioning. "Foots, have you ever seen Mr. Hensley and Mrs. Thornton display any sign of affection for each other?"

"No, sir. —What does that mean?"

"I mean—have you ever seen them holding hands, or kissing, or anything like that?"

"Oh—Yessir."

"Will you tell me how you happened to see it?"

"One night, Mama and I were coming home from Gran'daddy's house and when we passed Nez—Mrs. Thornton's house, she was sitting with Gilbert on the porch in the swing, and they were—kissing." Foots was suddenly shy and began twisting her handkerchief.

"Was that the only time."

"No, sir. Another time—I was just looking out the window and they'd been dancing, and they stopped in front of the window and kissed again."

"Thank you very much, Foots. That will be all." Judges Hayes dismissed her. "You've been of immeasurable assistance."

"But, Judge Hayes, I didn't tell you anything I told Mr. Thornton—about how good she is to 'em. Don't you want to hear?"

"I think you've told us enough, Foots. It was very nice of you to come up here and testify. You may go back to your seat now."

"But—well."

As she walked to her seat, Foots saw Daddy Thornton smiling broadly.

Mama led Foots out of the court room to the car. Daddy stayed where he was.

Mama drove home very fast without saying a word to Foots. Her face looked very hard and set. Foots felt afraid. "Mama—" she ventured. But Mama's cold "What is it?" repelled her and she said nothing.

When they got home Foots crept into her room and sat down by the window. Something was wrong. It was in the air. Daddy Thornton had looked like a pussy cat that had gotten into the salmon factory, and Mama—Mama had looked as though somebody had died. These people at court had stared at Foots so strangely as she had walked back to her seat . . . she felt queer. Judge Hayes hadn't asked her the right questions. Did you suppose —oh, *could* they take Maxine and Wynn away even if she hadn't gotten to tell how good Nez was to 'em? There was a vague ache in Foots' throat. It developed into a lump which hurt awfully. "I'm going to cry," Foots realized without knowing why.

When Mama came in to see why Foots didn't come to lunch, she found Foots with her face buried in her pillow which was quite damp. Foots' body was heaving with sobs.

Mama knelt beside the bed. "Tell Mama, honey," she whispered.

Foots raised her head a little. Her eyes were swollen almost shut, and her face was red. "Mama," she faltered, "can they take 'em anyway, even if I didn't get to tell what I wanted to?"

"Don't worry about it, dear. It'll all turn out for the best."

"But—if Judge Hayes says Daddy Thornton can have 'em, will Nez blame me?"

"Of course she won't, Foots. Now you come on to lunch, and don't think about it."

Foots could eat no lunch. She nibbled at a lettuce leaf, and Mama gave her some hot milk to make her sleep.

Worn out from the excitement, and from crying, Foots found sleep a welcome relief. She slept till Daddy came home from The Office.

Daddy had an evening paper with him, and spread it significantly before Mama. "See?" he said. "Out of the mouths of babes . . . "

"Sh-hh-h," Mama warned.

"Can I see, Daddy?" Foots asked.

"Here, you take the funnies, and let me read the outside."

Foots caught a glimpse of some pictures on the front page. They looked familiar, as if of someone she knew, but Daddy turned the page so quickly that they were blurred. He'd acted as though he didn't want her to see the paper. She read the comic section, biding her time. Somehow Mutt and Jeff weren't a bit funny tonight.

Finally, Daddy got up and went into the kitchen where Mama was fixing supper. The paper was lying in his chair, carefully folded. Foots just as carefully unfolded it.

No wonder the picture had looked familiar. It *was* of somebody she knew—knew quite well, in fact. It was a picture of Foots herself.

Under it were some big words. " 'Child's,' Foots read. "I know that one. 'Innocent'—we had that in the Sunday School lesson last time." Big words stumped her. " 'P-r-a-t-t-l-e.' Pr-a- I donno that one. 'Against.' I know that one. 'P-r-e-v-a-i-l-s.' Donno that one either. 'Play-girl's.' Does that mean me?" Another hard word stumped her. "D-e-f-e-n-s-e.'—Aw, pshaw! I can't read this ol' stuff." Foots gave up the puzzle and sat down the ottoman, the paper in her hand, brushing the floor. She *had* to know that was all there was to it. She had to know. She dared not ask Daddy, for fear he'd tell her what she dreaded had really happened.

She'd go over *there* and see. Foots slipped quietly out of the house and crossed the yard to Nez's flagstone path. There she stopped, her feet refusing to go farther. She forced them to carry her up the steps.

A strange woman answered the doorbell. "What do you want?" she asked impatiently. Foots looked past her. Everything in the room was in confusion. Clothes were strewn over the floor. Suitcases and hat-boxes lay around just anywhere.

"I want to see Maxine," Foots gulped.

The woman closed the door. In a moment it opened a crack, and a head appeared. It was Wynn, her face swollen from weeping.

"Go home, Foots Morley!" she screamed in rage. "I hate you! Maxine hates you! We *all* hate you!" And she slammed the door.

Foots walked slowly around the house to her flower garden. My, how strange her zinnias looked in the moonlight! She pulled one up to see if it had grown since the other day.

—*Louise Phagan,* '39.

THE END